

MEMORIAL

OF

CITIZENS OF WASHINGTON AND GEORGETOWN,

Praying authority to construct a railroad from Georgetown along Pennsylvania avenue to the Navy-yard, in Washington.

MARCH 21, 1860.—Ordered to lie on the table, and be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled:

Your memorialists, citizens of Washington and Georgetown, D. C., respectfully show that, with about four hundred associates, whom they have been authorized to represent, they applied to Congress early in the present session for a charter to construct a horse passenger railroad from the Navy-yard to Georgetown. Previous to the application, books had been opened, and the whole amount necessary to construct and stock the road has been subscribed exclusively by our own citizens. The originators of this movement were gentlemen well known in this community as being opposed to every scheme which would make this great public improvement a mere foot-ball for speculators. They were admonished by occurrences in other cities that the hope of extravagant gain in such undertakings might excite cupidity, and give rise to fraud; and they therefore limited the amount of each individual subscription to ten shares, or \$500, thus withdrawing their projected enterprise entirely from the field of speculation.

Since the application of your memorialists and their associates, some eight or ten respectable gentlemen presented an application for a charter for the same purpose, and the Senate committee have reported a bill to grant it to them, rather than to the several hundreds who had previously applied. To six or eight corporators the charter would be worth a large sum; to four hundred and odd equal corporators it could offer no speculative inducements. All who subscribed on the larger list stand ready to pay their subscription, on obtaining a charter, and they would expect their remuneration chiefly in a cheap, promptly built, well-made, well-managed railroad, in which all of our citizens who chose might be interested, and the stock of which would be distributed throughout the District in small individual amounts.

Your memorialists are perfectly well aware that they and their associates are not so well known to your honorable bodies as the respectable gentlemen named in the Senate bill; but they beg leave to say that they are mostly old citizens, identified for years with the welfare of Washington and Georgetown, and representing almost every trade and industrial pursuit, with both the means and the will to do as they agree. As evidence of their pecuniary ability to construct the road, the books of the corporation show that seventy-seven of their number are assessed at nearly two and a half millions of dollars for real estate alone, in the city of Washington; and they state, as a fact, that the real and personal property of your memorialists and associates is not less than five millions of dollars.

Your memorialists and their associates have not assumed, and will not assume, the right to say upon what conditions Congress should grant a charter. They know very well that Congress possesses the power to modify or reject any proposition they may make; and the sketch of a bill and other papers which accompanied their application were principally designed to furnish Congress with certain desirable data in the case. They would be glad to have conceded to them the more extended privileges proposed in the Senate bill. They are willing to accept any modification of their own plan that would not entail a positive loss; for the difference between a large and a small percentage upon an individual capital of \$500 is too insignificant a matter for anxiety or controversy. They believe that it is the wish of the people of the District that a charter should be granted to your memorialists and their associates; that, if so granted, the stock would be held in small sums as investments; that it would never become a speculation; that the road would be honestly, promptly, and prudently built and managed; and that in comparison with the respectable gentlemen named in the Senate bill, their relative claims to the consideration of Congress are as their relative numbers, assuming that all are equally meritorious as individuals. Your memorialists are also entitled to whatever of advantage should belong to priority of application.

But whether Congress shall or shall not grant to your memorialists and their associates the charter they have asked, they trust that in whatever charter may be given, a provision will be made that the mass of our citizens shall have an opportunity of subscribing for the stock in limited individual amounts, so that the profits, if any, arising from fares may be so distributed among those who will have contributed most towards them.

And as in duty bound, &c.

Cornelius Boyle,
John L. Smith,
Robert M. Sutton,
J. W. Thompson,
Nicholas Vedder,
R. M. Combes,
G. A. Bohrer,
Lewis Clephane,
W. F. Phillips,
Thos. U. Walter,

Wm. H. Ward,
S. D. Castleman,
John F. Ennis,
J. M. Brodhead,
John Van Riswick,
Geo. Mattingly,
George Parker,
B. F. Middleton,
Samuel Bacon,
Samuel Cole,

Wm. R. Riley,
Jno. H. Wheeler,
Geo. Chipman,
S. P. Franklin,
Hudson Taylor,
J. C. Willard,
John Dickson,
Joseph Bryan,
Francis Mohun,

D. W. Mahon,
Robert Beale,
A. Thos. Smith,
John Dowling,
Samuel A. Houston,
B. Milburn,
Jno. L. Kidwell,
Richard Pettit.

MARCH 19, 1860.

